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LUKE—TRANSLATOR OR AUTHOR?

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The question whether Luke translated written Semitic sources is not a new one. It was asked some time ago, but recently Professor C. C. Torrey has discussed it in a series of articles and has answered it emphatically in the affirmative.¹ Those who have reviewed his work appear with slight exception to agree with his verdict,² but they offer little or no examination of the evidence. Instead the discussion has developed into a debate over the inferences which should be drawn from such a conclusion.

The object of the following pages is to raise again the previous question, with the hope not of giving a final answer, but of restating the problem and of encouraging a more thorough examination. Attention here will be confined to the literary and linguistic aspects of the subject. No criticism is offered of Torrey's other conclusions, with many of which the present writer is inclined to agree on independent grounds. As compared with the analysts of Acts, with the advocates of *Tendenz*, and with many of the historical critics,

¹ "The Translations Made from the Original Aramaic Gospels," *Studies in the History of Religions Presented to Crawford Howell Toy* (1912), pp. 269 ff.; *The Composition and Date of the Acts* (1916); "Fact and Fancy in Theories Concerning Acts," *American Journal of Theology*, XXIII (1919), 61 ff., 189 ff. These three essays are quoted in the following pages as *Translations*, *Composition*, and *Fact and Fancy*, respectively.

² F. J. Foakes Jackson, "Professor C. C. Torrey on the Acts," *Harvard Theological Review*, X (1917), 352 ff.; Benj. W. Bacon, "More Philological Criticism of Acts," *American Journal of Theology*, XXII (1918), 1 ff.; William J. Wilson, "Some Observations on the Aramaic Acts," *Harvard Theological Review*, XI (1918), 74 ff.; "The Unity of Aramaic Acts," *ibid.*, 322 ff.

Since this article was written some foreign comment has come to hand not all favorable to Torrey's thesis; see especially F. C. Burkitt, *Journal of Theological Studies*, XX (1919), 320 ff. Note also F. J. M. Vosté, *Revue Biblique*, XIV (1917), 300 ff.; J. Moffatt, *Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament*, 2d edition (1919), 630 f.; A. S. Peake, *Commentary on the Bible* (1920), 742; C. A. A. Scott, *Expository Times*, XXXI (1920), 220 ff.

Dr. Torrey seems to have much the best of the argument. His treatment of historical topics is marked by sound sense and by a wholesome acknowledgment of the limitations of our knowledge. He is aware of the difficulty of proving dependence of Acts on any known or unknown Greek source, as Krenkel tried to prove the writer's dependence on Josephus, or Norden the influence of a model missionary sermon on Acts 17.¹

The evidence appealed to as proving Semitic sources in Luke's writings is somewhat different from that on which critics rely as indicating Greek sources. In the latter case, beside linguistic variations between different parts of the work, emphasis is laid upon differences of point of view or of purpose, doublets, contradictions, and marks of editorial welding. Proofs of this kind Torrey scarcely mentions, and he explicitly repudiates those which others use. Indeed, Luke and his sources seem to him homogeneous writings. Of the Aramaic source which he assumes for the first half of Acts Torrey declares a complete unity with the author of the whole work. "From their different points of view Luke and the Judean narrator were aiming to set forth precisely the same thing. Their main premises and chief arguments were practically identical, for the purposes of such a history as this."² Only at the beginning and end does he suggest a little discrepancy.³ He also contrasts the abundance of Old Testament quotation in the first chapters of Acts with its conspicuous absence in the last chapters.⁴

The chief marks of Luke's use of Semitic sources are to be found in the phenomena of language. Torrey suggests three classes of these:⁵

1. "Occasional phrases and constructions which 'sound Semitic rather than Greek.'"

2. Mistranslations. "Some word, phrase, or sentence sounds very improbable in the context where it stands; we reduce the Greek to its equivalent in Aramaic or Hebrew, and seem to discover that the translator had misunderstood his original."

¹ Krenkel, *Josephus und Lucas* (1894); Norden, *Agnostos Theos* (1913).

² *Composition*, p. 65; cf. *Fact and Fancy*, p. 69.

³ *Composition*, pp. 40 f.

⁵ *Translations*, pp. 282 ff.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 55-58.

3. "The continual presence, in texts of considerable extent, of a Semitic idiom underlying the Greek."

Of these three criteria the first two seem even to Professor Torrey extremely precarious. The mistranslation is particularly unreliable, and evidence of this variety is rarely convincing. "In nine cases out of ten," he says, "renewed study of the 'mistranslations' which we have discovered shows us either that there was no translation at all, or else that it was quite correct." But when he comes to give his own illustrations of Semitic influence Dr. Torrey does not avoid this class of evidence. Indeed the examples on which he lays most weight are of just this kind, arguments "from the double meaning of certain words, the ambiguity of clause-division, the probability of slight corruption in the text, and the like."

But it will be necessary to state his argument in detail, and in doing so we may well take up in succession three parts of Luke's work, the Nativity stories in Luke 1:5—2:52, the rest of the Gospel, and the first half of Acts.¹

I

The abundance of Semitic idiom in Luke 1:5—2:52 has long been well known and many scholars who have never suspected Semitic sources in other parts of Luke or Acts have suggested such an original here. Torrey also believes that these two chapters were translated, and that the underlying document was Hebrew rather than Aramaic. Like others he finds the change of style between verses 4 and 5 of chapter 1 convincing evidence. In the preface is displayed Luke's own unaffected idiomatic and cultured Greek, but with the next verse there begins a narrative that is marked by the constant reiteration of Semitic touches, which continue throughout the two chapters including the poetic passages.

To meet these arguments for a Semitic original for this section several objections may be urged. The stylistic contrast between the preface of Luke and the following narrative is indeed great, but the difference may be due to a different cause than the Semitic

¹ Acts 1:16—15:35. Following Torrey we shall use the abbreviation I Acts for this, and for the remainder of the book, II Acts.

origin of the latter. Ancient prefaces, as Hellenistic scholars have recognized, were special literary tasks, often composed quite independently of the body of the book to which they are attached. They had their fixed subjects and stereotyped forms and were often composed with great attention to rhetorical style and diction. They therefore display not infrequently a marked contrast in language from the body of the book. Thus technical scientific treatises were adorned with elegant *prooemia*. In Vitruvius, for example, the contrast between prefaces and the rest of the work is striking. Even Polybius, who was no rhetor but a writer notoriously indifferent to matters of style, felt bound out of respect for the taste of his contemporaries to employ in his preface some rhetorical methods.¹ Luke also conforms to this custom. His preface not only deals with the conventional themes: its style makes it the most rhetorical sentence in all his writings. Its clauses are carefully balanced, its words are sonorous and carefully selected. Notice *ἐπειδήπερ* for *ἐπειδή*, *πληροφορέω* for *πληρώω*, which together with *ἀνατάσσομαι*, *διήγησις*, and *παρακολουθέω* do not occur elsewhere in Luke's writings. The conventional use of *πολύς* and the title *κράτιστος* occur again in the latter part of Acts, but only in passages where, as here, Luke is using his best Greek to match the somewhat formal circumstances of his composition.² It is probable therefore that the contrast which the style of Luke's first four verses offers to that of the following narrative is due in part at least to the greater elegance which custom required of the preface of an ancient writing and is not wholly attributable to the influence of a style alien to the author's own range of expression, or to a writing in a foreign tongue that he is translating.

There is another objection against considering Luke, chapters 1 and 2, the translation of a Semitic original; that is, the influence of the Greek Old Testament. It is probably true, as Professor Torrey claims, that the use of the LXX in formal quotations from the

¹ There is much evidence to support this view, though little has been heretofore collected. I content myself here with quoting Norden, *Antike Kunstprosa*, p. 432: "Dass nun ein Proömium anders stilisiert als eine Abhandlung selbst, zumal eine technische, ist ja nicht nur nicht auffällig, sondern nach eine durchgängig befolgten Prinzip des Altertums selbstverständlich."

² *κράτιστος*, Acts 23:26; 24:3; 26:25; initial *πολύς*, Acts 24:2, 10.

Old Testament in the New does not disprove the use of a Semitic source. A translator would be quite likely in such cases to adopt the familiar rendering of the Greek without trying to translate the Scripture afresh from the Semitic form before him. But in the case of mere phrases rather than formal citations from the Bible the same conformity is not expected. Luke, chapters 1 and 2, though they contain few formal quotations from the Old Testament, are replete with biblical echoes. Not only the songs but the narrative and dialogue are strongly reminiscent of the Old Testament, especially of its Nativity stories.¹ And these resemblances extend not merely to the thought and arrangement, but to the wording of the stories in their Greek form. If the evidence presented by Wellhausen, Harnack, and others were supplemented by a fuller collection of the parallels, the likeness would confirm their impression that the narratives and canticles in Luke were composed in Greek.

And this impression is further confirmed by the abundance in these two chapters of words characteristic of Luke. Torrey indeed acknowledges this abundance, but it seems to him quite compatible with a literal translation of a Semitic original: "Luke rendered the Hebrew Gospel of the Nativity with the most minute faithfulness, as a close study of it shows."² But one may well ask, Can a translator combine faithfulness to his original with such evident freedom in the use of his own style? Torrey seems to think that an author's individual style is more readily displayed when translating than when editing a Greek source. However, that is not a foregone conclusion in the case of Hellenistic historians, whatever may have been the practice of Semitic editors. The method of a Greek editor is the method of paraphrase, a free reproduction of the thought of his sources in his own style. And certainly these two chapters in Luke, as far as they exhibit his own distinctive idiom,

¹ These are the stories in Genesis relating the birth of sons to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Judg., chap. 13 (on the birth of Samson), and I Sam. 1:2 (on the birth of Samuel). There is a distinct connection between the Song of Hannah and the canticles of Luke, chap. 1, not only as a motif, but in wording. And a whole series of striking linguistic resemblances binds this and the other passages mentioned to the narratives of Luke.

² *Translations*, p. 305.

are fully as easily explained as based on Greek or oral sources as they are assigned to the literal rendering of a Semitic original.

Particularly if one acknowledge the influence of the Old Testament on these chapters, is Torrey's hypothesis a somewhat complicated one. For the influence affects both the thought and the Greek wording and would require that both the original author and the translator were subject to the same influence, the former composing the stories with the motifs of the Old Testament parallels affecting his representation, the latter translating them into a language that should at one and the same time accomplish three results—should render the Hebrew literally ("in poetical passages . . . word by word, and clause by clause"),¹ should agree verbally with the Greek Old Testament stories of nativities, and should exhibit to a greater extent than in many other parts of his work the peculiarities and characteristics of his own style and diction.² Perhaps such a coincidence between author and translator and such a *tour de force* on the part of latter are not inconceivable. The question is one of the psychological probabilities of authorship, and any decision is bound to be somewhat tentative and subjective. But one is certainly justified in opposing to Torrey's hypothesis the conviction that the same phenomena could have been produced by an author whose knowledge of the Greek Bible was responsible not only for the definite echoes to it of which we have spoken but also for the idioms which seem to Professor Torrey to require a Hebrew original. Surely if a man can recall the wording of the Greek Bible he can also recall its style.

II

With regard to the rest of Luke's Gospel it is difficult to make a suitable answer to Torrey's view, as that view has scarcely been stated by him, much less presented with the evidence. In his latest paper he seems to hold that the whole Third Gospel was originally in Aramaic and that "Luke's own work there is almost solely that of translator."³ In his earlier discussion he asserted

¹ *Translations*, p. 294; cf. *Composition*, p. 60, note. ² *Translations*, p. 295.

³ *Fact and Fancy*, p. 63; cf. p. 210 note: "I was not then (1912) so sure as I am now that Luke used *only Semitic sources* in compiling his Gospel."

that "the Third Gospel was composed in Greek," and used the Greek sources Mark and Q, but he added to this familiar hypothesis the use of the Greek Matthew and of Aramaic originals of Mark and Q, and the translation of other Semitic sources.¹ In either case the effect of translation from the Semitic would be considerable.

The reasons for this hypothesis appear to be not only the Semitic idiom in the Greek of the gospel but also the presumptions that Aramaic written gospels existed, that they were earlier in date than the Greek, and that Luke would have sought them out and used them in preference to other materials² or to the free editorial method so usual with Hellenistic historians. Now I am not inclined to take Luke's preface so seriously. As has already been said, it was a standard part of any ambitious or formal composition. Its themes were already stereotyped, like the claims of authentic sources and of diligent study which Luke makes in his preface. Luke's treatment of Mark and Q indicates not the concurrent use of many sources but the exclusive use of one or at most two sources at a time. Under any circumstances, but especially with ancient books, the combined use of many sources, especially of parallel ones, is very difficult. And, besides, the actual relation existing between Luke and the other synoptists points to the editing of the two earlier Greek documents as its explanation. It must be admitted that the view that Luke used a Greek Mark and Q cannot be easily proved by the use of merely a few examples to those who are inclined to doubt it. It is, as Torrey confesses of his own theory, one of the cases where the evidence "can be fully appreciated only by those who have worked laboriously through the mass of material, observing how certain facts and principles demonstrate themselves a hundred times over."³ But just such an independent study of the details has been made during the past decades by a variety of persons, and their repeated labors have confirmed the current solution of the synoptic problem.

For the Greek verbal likenesses between our gospels Torrey has a somewhat novel explanation. Though they are translations of Semitic originals they are not quite independent translations, but

¹ *Translations*, pp. 297 ff.

² *Composition*, p. 5.

³ *Fact and Fancy*, p. 194, note.

are related to each other much as are the English versions of the Bible, successive revisions of an earlier version. This explanation requires, however, a somewhat improbable and unproved series of assumptions. Do we know, for instance, that "the Greek Mark, both separate and as incorporated by the Greek translator of Matthew, had already the authority of a standard document among those for whom Luke wrote,"¹ so that Luke would conform to its wording whenever his Semitic source was parallel to it, as he conformed to the wording of the Greek Old Testament whenever his Semitic source quoted the Old Testament in a Semitic form?² Surely this is particularly doubtful, if the Gospel of Luke was written by 60 A.D., if the author valued Semitic sources higher than Greek, and if Mark and Q in both Greek and Aramaic, both separately and combined in Matthew were already in circulation in various recensions—all of which hypotheses Torrey himself believes.³

Nor does a comparison of the wording of the Gospels confirm this view. Luke's changes from Mark are not the changes of more literal translation but of paraphrase. Where he is parallel with Mark he often removes or corrects Semitic idioms, where he is suspected of being independent of Mark or any other known source his own Semitisms creep in, and where in passages parallel to Mark he seems to be more Semitic in wording than his Greek predecessor there is nearly always concurrent evidence that he is writing independently in his own style. Torrey has not yet given any list of examples from this part of Luke, as he has for the other two sections of his work which are under discussion. But at least in the passages of Luke that are parallel to Mark he will find it difficult to prove that the Semitic idioms are derived from either the Greek Mark or its Semitic original. And for the present we shall do well to regard these passages as based on Greek sources and revised not in the interests of greater fidelity to a Semitic original but in accordance with Luke's own tastes in style.

¹ *Translations*, p. 306.

² *Composition*, p. 58: "Luke was Hellenist enough to give, on principle, every quotation from the Old Testament in the form in which it had stood for centuries in the Greek Bible and was familiar to those for whom he wrote."

³ *Composition*, p. 68; *Translations*, p. 306, 296 ff.

III

The most abundant linguistic argument is given by Torrey for his hypothesis of an Aramaic original for I Acts. In his pamphlet on the *Composition of Acts* he gives first a mere list of Aramaic idioms, then a full discussion of six instances of "serious mistranslation," and finally a brief explanation of some fifty examples from these chapters in Acts of phrases or faults of sentence structure due to translation from Aramaic. As Professor Torrey elsewhere had admitted the precariousness of the evidence from alleged mistranslation,¹ it will be well to confine a limited discussion like the present to the other examples, especially those which are declared to be literal renderings from the Aramaic.²

¹ See above, p. 438.

² By way of example perhaps one of Torrey's cases of mistranslation may be considered here at length. In Acts 14:17 we read *καίτοι οὐκ ἀμάρτυρον αὐτὸν ἀφῆκεν ἀγαθουργῶν, οὐρανὸθεν ὑμῖν ὑετοῦς διδοὺς καὶ καιροῦς καρποφόρους, ἐμπιπλῶν τροφῆς καὶ εὐφροσύνης τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν*. In his *Composition* (p. 38) Torrey says of this verse: "There is apparently a mistranslation of some sort here. It is no more agreeable to usage in Aramaic or Greek to speak of 'filling hearts with food' than it is in English. Perhaps originally 'filling your hearts *with all* gladness, (cf. Rom. 15:13); and confusion of מִכֶּל with מֵכֶּל 'food,' since the *nun* of the preposition was frequently assimilated at this time in Judea, but very rarely elsewhere. The verb מִלֵּא might of course be construed either with מֵכֶּל or with direct object."

We may agree with Torrey that the expression "filling our hearts with food and gladness" is an awkward zeugma, but the combination of food and gladness is too characteristic of Luke to suppose that here it is the result of a blind misreading of the original. Except in one quotation from Scripture (Acts 2:26-28) the words *εὐφραίνω* and *εὐφροσύνη* are used in Luke's writings always in connection with feasting, e.g., four times of the feast held in honor of the prodigal son's return (Luke 15:23, 24, 29, 32). As Harnack says (*Acts of the Apostles*, p. 278, note): "From these passages, and from 12:19 and 16:19, one sees that St. Luke likes to connect, indeed almost exclusively connects, *εὐφραίνεισθαι* with the partaking of food. Just in the same way we read in Acts 14:17 that God fills men's hearts with *τροφὴ καὶ εὐφροσύνη* (see also Acts 7:41) and in Acts 2:46: *μετελάμβανον τροφῆς ἐν ἀγαλλιάσει καὶ ἀφελότητι καρδίας*." In the LXX too *εὐφραίνω* and also *ἐμπιπλημι* are often connected with eating. And the association of hearts with the latter verb is not so difficult if we recall that both in the New Testament and in the Greek where a Semitic background is even more certain "fill" has come to mean "to satisfy" (LXX, Ps. Sol., XII P.). In these writings *ψυχὴ* more often than *καρδία* is used in such connections, and Luke himself also uses it in Luke 12:19: *ψυχή, . . . φάγε, πίε, εὐφραίνου*, where some early scribes seem to have felt literalist objections like those of Torrey (see the readings of B, D, and the Old Latin MSS. The Vulgate translates the last word baldly *epulare*). As for *καρδία* we

The passages selected include most of the long-standing puzzles in the first fifteen chapters of Acts. These and of course all the examples have been studied for years. Greek literature has been searched for parallels to the New Testament, and even to all these so-called Semitisms parallels from profane literature have been sought and often found. The modern study of the papyri has yielded a rich harvest and has considerably reduced, even if it has not entirely eliminated, the category of unparalleled Semitisms. But it would be manifestly unfair to condemn the argument of Torrey because somewhere in Greek literature a parallel can be found for each of his examples. As he himself declares the force of his argument is cumulative. It is not the isolated phenomena but the total effect of numerous instances.¹

But in the criticism of Luke's writings there has been such an unfortunate series of abuses of the linguistic argument that one naturally pauses before accepting a new application of it. We have heard the word "cumulative" before. Krenkel endeavored by

may remember that elsewhere Luke does not hesitate to speak of hearts as weighed down with drunkenness and nausea (Luke 21:34).

Several others of the combinations of thought in the phrase under discussion are also illustrated in Luke's writings. And in at least two of these parallels (Luke 1:53; Acts 2:26 ff.) the Greek Psalter is responsible for the wording. Indeed if some literary dependence must be sought for the passage Acts 14:17 it will be found as a reminiscence of this same Greek Psalter rather than in the hypothesis of mistranslation of some lost Christian Aramaic record. The Psalter has affected in other cases the speeches in Acts. The speeches at Lystra and at Athens do not quote it as directly as some others, since they were delivered to Gentiles rather than to Jews. Yet both these speeches have echoes of the Greek Psalter (cf. Acts 14:15 and 17:24 with Ps. 146:6; Acts 17:31 with Ps. 9:8; 96:13; 98:9). It is not unlikely that the combination of words loosely brought together in the present passage represents such ideas as we find in Ps. 4:7 f. (note ἀγαθά, ἐφ' ἧς ἐστὶν ἡ καρδία, ἀπὸ καρποῦ . . . ἐπληθύνθησαν, and even ἐσημειώθη, which is not in Hebrew, may correspond to ἀμάρτυρον); 102:13 ff. (where in addition to the mention of rain, fruit, and food we have οἶνος ἐφ' ἧς ἐστὶν ἡ καρδία ἀνθρώπου); 147:8 f. (note οὐρανόν, ὑετόν, διδόντι . . . τροφήν).

¹ "It is only when the idiom is one link in a long chain that it becomes convincing; then, indeed, it may have absolutely compelling force. The argument is cumulative; we are concerned with the continuous impression made by a great mass of material" (*Translations*, p. 274). "In any case, the argument is cumulative, indications that would be quite insignificant if taken by themselves becoming highly important as links in a long chain" (*ibid.*, p. 284). "The evidence of I Acts alone, cumulative and consistent as it is . . ." (*Fact and Fancy*, 63).

hundreds of linguistic links to establish Luke's dependence on Josephus.¹ It was by the use of cumulative evidence, which on inspection proved worthless,² that Hobart claimed Luke's acquaintance with the medical writings and led after him many of the best scholars of Europe. Even the Baconian authorship of Shakspeare has been "proved" by cumulative linguistic evidence. Of course Torrey's argument is far more restrained and cautious, and yet under the circumstances it is no hypercriticism to examine his evidence with special skepticism. One feels that evidence of this kind must be qualitative as well as quantitative, comparative as well as cumulative.

When, however, one seeks fair bases of comparison the material is limited. Was it not possible for an early Christian or a Hellenistic Jew to write a narrative as Semitic as that of Luke without being a translator? By hypothesis Torrey excludes many parallels, for if the Semitisms are abundant in any book the work is not a Greek composition. Thus the apocryphal books of the Old Testament and much of the New Testament are excluded from use as parallels. He suggests only II and III Maccabees and II Acts as suitable examples of untranslated Greek. He would probably have to add the letters of Paul and the Apostolic Fathers.³ Let us

¹ From Krenkel and elsewhere several parallels to "Aramaisms" of Luke may be quoted for Josephus; but I pass these by. In spite of the uniform and idiomatic Greek of his writings it would be possible to claim that his *War* was translation Greek since he claims to have translated it.

² I may refer to the discussion of this subject in my *Style and Literary Method of Luke* (1919), pp. 39 ff.

³ I do not discover what Torrey thinks of the original language of John. Some of his evidences of Aramaic translation occur in it. Thus with *πάλιν ἐκ δευτέρου* (Acts 10:15; Matt. 26:42) we may compare *ἐκ δευτέρου* (John 9:24) and for the tautology, *πάλιν δεύτερον*, which occurs not only in John 4:54 but in the appendix, John 21:16. Even the *pericope adulterae* contains the "Aramaic idiom" *ἀρξάμενος ἀπὸ . . . ἔως*, confirming perhaps its original place as in Luke's Gospel, or, as Eusebius suggests, in the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*. But even the scribes indulge in Semitisms. Codex Bezae in its variants shows some of Torrey's marks of translation from the Aramaic; e.g., *ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό* (see p. 454, note) is read by D at Acts 2:46; 16:35. Indeed the Semitic elements in this MS were so abundant as to suggest to Chase a Syriac origin. In the Gospels also Moulton (*Einleitung*, p. 371, following Wellhausen) finds D nearer the Aramaic original than B and \aleph . But in other cases this codex omits the Semitic idiom. Shall we therefore agree with Blass that the β text of Acts is the author's own variant edition of his Greek work, and add the further hypothesis of two Aramaic editions!

see then what parallels can be found. Paul's letters contain several of Torrey's examples. Thus ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό cited as an evidence of translation in Acts 1:15; 2:1, 44 (as well as of mistranslation in 2:47) occurs three times in I Corinthians (7:5; 11:20; 14, 23) not to mention other writings.¹ ἐκ κοιλίας μητρός occurs not only in Acts 3:2; 14:8 (and Luke 1:15) but also in Gal. 1:15. The use of ἀπό for ὑπό of the agent is cited by Torrey as an illustration of translation from the Semitic in Acts 2:22; 15:4 B.C. But the exchange is frequent with the scribes of the New Testament MSS, and only anticipates what has become an established custom in Modern Greek.² As an example in Paul II Cor. 7:13 may be noted. Again he says on Acts 14:15 (*Composition*, p. 63): "ἐπὶ θεὸν ζῶντα (without the article!) renders exactly the Aramaic equivalent . . . of the standing Hebrew phrase . . . 'the living God.'" In the very similar passage in I Thess. 1:9 we have the words δουλεύειν θεῷ ζῶντι καὶ ἀληθινῷ and neither there nor in Heb. 3:12; 9:14; 10:31; 12:22 nor in I Tim. 3:15; 4:10 has the phrase ζῶν θεός an article.³

Other illustrations of Torrey's examples could be quoted from Paul, but let us consider briefly another writer, Hermas the author of the three sections which make up the book called *The Shepherd*. It is improbable that this Roman production was the translation of a Semitic original and yet it contains repeatedly the phrase ἀναβαίνειν ἐπὶ τὴν καρδίαν, as used in Acts 7:23 and Luke 24:38, and the same passive ἐνδυναμοῦσθαι that occurs in Acts 9:22.⁴

Especially noteworthy are the parallels from II Acts. The transition from indirect to direct discourse like that in 1:4 occurs also in 23:22 and 25:4f. In the former case, as in 1:4, the sentence begins with using παραγγέλλω and the infinitive. "The way"

¹ See Vazakas in *Journal of Biblical Literature*, XXXVII (1918), 106 f.; Moulton and Milligan, *Vocabulary*, s.v. αὐτός for Acts 2:47. Even III Macc. 3:1 contains the phrase.

² Torrey appears to overlook a third case in I Acts (4:36; here D reads ὑπό).

³ It may be doubtful whether I Pet. 1:23, διὰ λόγου ζώντος θεοῦ καὶ μένοντος, should be quoted here or as illustrating the "error in the Semitic original" which Torrey finds in Acts 7:38, λογία ζῶντα for which see also Heb. 4:12. Among other cases of ζῶν θεός without the article are II Cor. 3:3; 6:16; Rev. 7:2; II [Clem.] 20:2.

⁴ *Composition*, p. 7.

which Torrey speaks of as a genuine Semitic locution in 9:2, even though it was "taken over by Gentile Christians," cannot be any more evidence of a Semitic original in the first account of Paul's conversion than in the second (22:4) or in 24:22 or elsewhere in II Acts. *ἀναστάς* in 5:17 may readily be understood as *ἀναστάντες* in 23:9. And surely the expression *ἐπλήρου δρόμον* (13:25) is not to be considered any more Semitic than *τελειῶσαι τὸν δρόμον* in 20:24 (*cf.* II Tim. 4:7) when one observes how these two verbs and their compounds are used interchangeably in connection with the completion of periods of time throughout Luke's writings. The phrase *ἔθου ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ* (5:4) may be matched with *ἔθετο ἐν τῷ πνεύματι* (21:14). Even Torrey grants this and a few other Semitisms to II Acts, but how grudgingly he does so may be seen from his own statement on page 7 of his pamphlet on the *Composition of Acts*, where he charges them to the *Koiné* but adds that "their presence may be due in part to the influence of the translation Greek which Luke had so extensively read and written. In either case they are negligible."¹

But these parallels in II Acts are to be found, not in isolated passages, but regularly wherever the situation suggests the same mood, as for example in Paul's speech to the elders at Miletus and in the various divine utterances that are reported. The parallels of these latter passages, brief though they are, to the Canticles in the early part of the Gospel are striking, not perhaps in wording, but in general style. Note for example the abundance of pronouns at the end of lines and the use of the epexegetical infinitive with *τοῦ*.

IV

It is particularly unfortunate that Torrey has by his hypothesis excluded from consideration the unusual similarity of phrase and idiom running throughout Luke's writings. This peculiarity is abundant where no suspicion of Semitic influence exists and is plainly due to the Greek style of the author. When therefore a

¹ But one of these idioms, *τότε*, is declared on the next page in the note to be due to the influence of the Aramaic, while in earlier writings Torrey had declared it to be a sure sign of the translation from a written Aramaic source. See his *Ezra Studies*, pp. 23 f., 50. See also his remarks in *ZATW*, XX (1900), 236 on *καὶ νῦν*, which like *τότε* is about equally distributed in the two halves of Acts.

claim is made for Semitic influence in a phrase that is repeated in Luke's writings it is difficult to accept the conclusion. Thus the notable likeness of idiom which connects Luke, chapters 1 and 2, with I Acts is not due to the recurrence of the same Semitic idiom in Luke's sources (in this case in two different Semitic languages) but to the common method of the author. Indeed it is striking that the closest parallels to Luke's Semitic idiom are not in Mark and Matthew and Revelation, the other New Testament books that may be supposed to be translations, but are confined exclusively to Luke's own writings. Why, for instance, if the loose use of the participle "beginning,"¹ the use of *συμπληρώω* with expressions of time,² the insertion of the interval of time in the nominative case³ and other expressions in Acts are exact and literal renderings of the Aramaic—why, we may ask, do the parallels to these appear only in Luke's Gospel, when all the Gospels are exact renderings from the Aramaic? Some of the strangest of Torrey's examples repeat themselves too exactly and too exclusively in Luke's writings to avoid the suspicion of being due to the Greek writer's own idiom. Thus "the awkward position of *διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου*," which in Acts 1:2 is a "result of translation," occurs again with equal awkwardness in Acts 4:25. A similar coincidence in order exists in the expression *διὰ στόματος τῶν ἁγίων ἀπ' αἰῶνος προφητῶν*, which occurs not only in the Benedictus, where Luke is following an original Hebrew "word by word, and clause by clause," but in Acts 3:21. Shall we assume an underlying homogeneity between the several Semitic sources of Luke as well as between Luke and his sources, so that the expression *καὶ ἦν χεὶρ κυρίου μετ' αὐτῶν*, which Luke who "had read so extensively" the translation Greek of the LXX could have found in many passages there, is first used in the Hebrew source of Luke 1:66, then in the Aramaic source of Acts 11:21 and rendered exactly in both cases, *μετά* and all? Or shall we say that the familiar Old Testament idiom, *προσέθετο* and the infinitive, which even "the virgin purity of Josephus' Atticism" permitted,⁴ occurs in the New Testament only in Acts 12:3 and Luke 20:11, 12 because his sources used it in the Aramaic, while we infer that in the passages parallel

¹ *Composition*, p. 26.² *Ibid.*, p. 28.³ *Ibid.*, p. 31.⁴ J. H. Moulton, *Cambridge Biblical Essays*, p. 477.

to the latter instance the sources of Matthew and Mark did not use the idiom because their Greek gospels do not have it.¹

In the case of some of Torrey's examples another objection may be urged. For while his explanations based on a knowledge of Semitic are often very clever, he has sometimes overlooked or refused to accept simple and natural explanations and preferred the more far-fetched suggestions that his Aramaic learning has supplied. Thus at Acts 9:31 he has connected the words *πορευομένη* . . . *ἐπληθύνετο* and interpreted them according to the common Semitic idiom to mean "continually grew." The intervening dative *τῷ φόβῳ τοῦ κυρίου καὶ τῇ παρακλήσει τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος* is then construed with *ἐπληθύνετο* rather than with *πορευομένη*. But *πληθύνω*, though it is repeatedly used without modifier of growth of numbers in the church in Acts, is never used there of growth in spiritual qualities and never is modified by a dative, while *πορεύομαι* is used in the sense of conducting one's life (no doubt another Semitic idiom; see Plummer, *ad loc.*) in Luke 1:6 *πορευόμενοι ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ἐντολαῖς καὶ δικαιώμασιν τοῦ κυρίου ἄμεμπτοι*. There is plenty of good Hellenistic Greek support for such phrases as *λύσας τὰς ὠδῖνας* (2:24); *ἀρχαί* (10:11; 11:5); *θυμομαχῶν* (12:20), as a look into Wettstein would prove. They do not require retranslation into Semitic to become intelligible. Even the much discussed *συναλιζόμενος* in Acts 1:4 is not much helped by showing that in Syriac there is a verb which parallels one of the several possible explanations of the word in this passage.²

¹ Matt. 21:36; Mark 12:4, 5. This is one of the cases where D in Luke avoids the Semitic idiom; see above, p. 446, n. 3. On the other hand D is nearly alone in reading at Mark 14:25, *οὐ μὴ προσθῶ πείν*. For another example see I Clem. 12:7. But even this idiom "cannot be regarded as non-Greek" according to A. Thumb (Hastings, *D.A.C.*, I, 556b, referring to Helbing, *Grammatik der LXX*, p. 4).

Similarly Luke alone (5:14) in the injunction to the leper has the transition from the indirect discourse to the direct: *παρήγγειλεν αὐτῷ μηδενὶ εἰπεῖν, ἀλλὰ ἀπελθὼν δεῖξον σεαυτὸν κ.τ.λ.*, which affords a perfect parallel to the "Aramaisms" in Acts (1:4 *et al.*; see above p. 447). Matthew and Mark have here direct discourse only.

² Even if there is no satisfactory explanation of the Greek, the hypothesis of translation does not any more effectively acquit Luke of a carelessness in these cases, which is inconsistent with his more careful composition (or translation) elsewhere. Thus if the awkward sentences like those in 3:16; 8:7; 10:36 f. are really to be accepted as the original Greek form of the text and not attributed to scribal corruption (for the habits of scribes in their bad points as well as their good ones are closely

It is doubtful too if Torrey gains much by assuming that certain passages are mistranslations of Semitic phrases which are evidently correctly rendered by the Greek translator elsewhere. Thus Torrey explains at some length¹ that in the account of the increase in the number of Christians in Acts 2:47 the words ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό represent an Aramaic phrase that should have been rendered σφόδρα. But in 6:17 we have σφόδρα in just this connection: καὶ ἐπληθύνετο ὁ ἀριθμὸς τῶν μαθητῶν ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ σφόδρα. Again he declares² that in Luke 2:11 χριστὸς κύριος is "an obvious error of translation" for 'Yahwe's Anointed.' But a few verses later we find the same expression which he suggests as a correct translation, τὸν χριστὸν κυρίου (2:26). Are we to suppose that in these cases we have a translator with an average of 50 per cent in accuracy?³

parallel to those of translators), then surely it is as possible to attribute to Luke, who whether translating or composing knew Greek idiom when he saw it, a lapse in his own Greek as to accept the ingenious mistranslations which Torrey has discovered.

¹ *Composition*, pp. 10-14.

² *Translations*, p. 293.

³ Luke's appositional use of χριστὸς here is supported by other passages, e.g. Luke 23:2, χριστὸν βασιλέα; Acts 2:36, καὶ κύριον καὶ χριστὸν (to which Acts 3:18, τὸν χριστὸν αὐτοῦ, corresponds as a variation, just as Luke 2:26 corresponds to 2:11. Such variation of expression in nearby contexts is a constant trait of Luke's style; see J. H. Ropes, *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, XII [1901], 299 ff. including some examples with χριστὸς on pp. 302 f.). The oldest MSS of two Jewish passages, Lam. 4:20 (Heb. 'Jahwe's Anointed') and Ps. Sol. 17:36, read χριστὸς κύριος. But these mistranslations—if such they originally were—do not prove that Luke also mistranslated, but rather indicate that to early Greek scribes and Christians the appositional phrase was quite as tolerable as the construct phrase.

A similar objection can be made to the example which Torrey (*Composition*, pp. 20 f.) describes as "one of the most satisfactory of all, in the proof of translation which it affords." It is the prediction of Agabus in Acts 11:28 of a famine to come upon the whole world (ἐφ' ὅλην τὴν οἰκουμένην). Such an extensive famine did not take place, so far as we know from other sources, "in the days of Claudius." To preserve Luke (and Agabus) from the suspicion of exaggeration Torrey supposes that the ambiguous Aramaic ܡܕܢܚܐ (=Heb. ָמָדָנָה, "land, earth") stood in the original and meant Palestine alone, while Luke has understood it of the world. This, he says, "is a mistake that has been made a great many times." But again, as in the cases discussed above, another passage (in Luke 4:25, which presumably Torrey would consider translated from the same Aramaic word) speaks of a famine in Palestine: ἐγένετο λιμὸς μέγας ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν. Perhaps οἰκουμένη ought not to be pressed in its widest meaning. Even in Greek it may be approximately coextensive with γῆ. It occurs in the New Testament with γῆ in passages where it connotes the more human rather than the more extended meaning, e.g., Rev. 3:10, ἐπὶ τῆς οἰκουμένης . . . ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς; Luke 21:25 f., ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς . . . τῇ οἰκουμένῃ. But even if οἰκουμένη is

Of course with all our objections we are far from denying the presence of real Semitic idioms in Luke's writings. When all allowances are made some genuine Semitisms remain. In I Acts they are to be found especially in the dialogue and the formal speeches. But they need not be construed as direct translations from a Semitic original. They can readily be explained as due to the extensive influence of the LXX. Even conscious imitation is not out of the question, if we recall the emphasis on style that prevailed among Greek writers of Luke's day. Luke himself was no mean artist. Even Torrey admits that he was a widely experienced and accomplished author and that he used Atticisms in the Areopagus address and avoided them in other parts of his history where they would have been an absurd affectation.¹ Is it not equally possible that where the idiom of Palestine was appropriate the author used it quite as deliberately? The speeches particularly were pliable to the author's own skill, and it is just in these that Semitic idiom is so abundant. Torrey admits that they are free compositions, quite independent of any original sources of a historical kind. And it is no more difficult to conceive of these speeches as written in Greek than in Aramaic. A man who could quote the Greek Bible so readily where more or less definite quotations are involved could certainly echo its idiom where he is not quoting a definite passage.

taken literally, exaggeration is not out of the question in a writer who may be suspected not only of overstatement (Luke 12:1; Acts 21:20; 24:10; 25:24, and elsewhere) but of giving predictions in terms that do not exactly match the fulfilment (Luke, chap. 21; Acts 20:25; 21:11; *ῥήσουσιν* . . . *οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι* [Agabus, contrast 22:25]).

In the parallel case cited by Torrey (Luke 2:1), where he says that Luke "represented Quirinius as taxing 'all the world' instead of 'all the land' of Palestine" (*Composition*, p. 21), the exaggeration is at least in part due to Torrey, or shall we say to the source which he translated? (for Wellhausen, *Analyse der Apostelgeschichte*, on Acts 11:28 refers to the census of Quirinius as *ökumenisch*). This is unfair to Luke, who really represents Augustus as taxing the world and Quirinius as being governor of Syria at the time. For how much of his empire Augustus provided a census is a different and (except for Egypt) an otherwise uncertain question. But one can reasonably object if Torrey wishes us to believe that this is the literal translation of an original (Hebrew in this case, "the style is one continuous Hebraism") which began "there went forth a decree that all the land (meaning Syria) should be taxed" and continued, "this was the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria (meaning all the land)."

¹ *Composition*, p. 53.

It is true that Torrey discusses and condemns the view that these phenomena are due to imitation. But the illustrations he adduces of schoolboy translations are not the only parallels available. A better illustration is the widespread acquaintance with the language of the Bible in modern times. Probably the Semitic idiom of the Greek Bible was as familiar to the Greek-speaking Jew or Christian of the first century as the language of the English Bible is to the children of pious modern homes. And on appropriate occasions either style can be adopted naturally and without affectation. The language used in public prayer is as different from ordinary English as the constant Semitic idiom of Peter's speech at Antioch is different from the literary language which Luke "and Theophilus and their circles were accustomed to use." It is true that biblical English involves English archaisms as well as Semitisms for those who use it today. But Bunyan's English was Semitic and biblical and not archaic, and the use of biblical language by Bunyan or Lincoln or any modern Christian is no more proof of his independent study of Hebrew than Luke's style is proof of a knowledge of Semitic language on his part. The least questionable of Torrey's illustrations are exactly those expressions which are most readily adopted and imitated in any language without a knowledge of "the original tongues."¹

It is no doubt rash to disagree with so accurate and careful a scholar as Professor Torrey, particularly when one cannot claim his wide knowledge of Semitic literature for one's self.² But

¹ E.g., the construction with *ἐγένετο*, and the expressions with *πρόσωπον*, *χέιρ*, *στόμα*, *καρδία*, and other parts of the body. Even Acts 17:26 has *ἐπὶ παντός προσώπου τῆς γῆς*, like Luke 21:35 *ἐπὶ πρόσωπον πάσης τῆς γῆς*. As for *πρὸ προσώπου τῆς εἰσόδου αὐτοῦ*, instead of being "altogether too literal a translation" (Torrey, *Composition*, p. 37) of an Aramaic document, one can scarcely doubt that it too is due to the LXX and that the author has in mind the usual *testimonium* to John the Baptist in Mal. 3:1 and has conflated the *πρὸ προσώπου* with the *εἰσόδου αὐτοῦ* of the next verse.

² It behooves the layman to be very modest in his opinions of Aramaic, since even doctors disagree. See the difference of opinion between Dalman and Torrey revealed in the latter's note (*Composition*, p. 33). It is particularly difficult to distinguish between the Hebrew and Aramaic, and it is doubtful whether Torrey would lay much weight on the claim that some of his examples in I Acts are "specifically Aramaic" (*Composition*, p. 6). Of those thus designated the "redundant demonstrative" in Acts 1:5, *μετὰ πολλὰς ταύτας ἡμέρας*, which he assigns to Jewish Aramaic (J. H. Moulton, *Grammar*, I, 21 claims this among "phrases literally translated from the

Professor Torrey himself has invited criticism of his thesis and he would probably agree with the words of the late Dr. J. H. Moulton when he says, speaking of Luke's Semitisms: "Neither Aramaic specialists nor Hellenistic have the right to decide whether he had any knowledge of a Semitic tongue: what we really need is

Latin"), is illustrated in the Book of Exodus: 2:23 (so 4:18 [LXX]), *μετὰ δὲ τὰς ἡμέρας τὰς πολλὰς ἐκείνας*; 2:11, *ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ταῖς πολλαῖς ἐκείναις*; while *ἀνέβη ἐπὶ τὴν καρδίαν* (Acts 7:23) cannot be limited to the Aramaic in the light of the Greek parallels in Isa. 65:16, 17; Jer. 3:16, etc.

Even more misadventurous are the two or three attempts which Torrey makes to prove that the original was not merely Aramaic but a special Judean brand of Aramaic. One of them is the passage 14:17 already considered (above p. 444, n. 2) where in support of the alleged mistranslation he remarks (*italics not mine*): "the *nun* of the preposition was frequently assimilated at this time *in Judea, but very rarely elsewhere*." We have seen reasons for doubting the whole theory of mistranslation there. Another example of specifically Judean Aramaic is the "mistranslation" of Acts 2:47. Torrey (*Composition*, pp. 10-14) understands the *ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ* there to represent the Aramaic compound *לחדוּ*, which is the equivalent of the Hebrew and usually means "together." "But in the Judean dialects," says Torrey (*in italics*), "the usual meaning of *לחדוּ* is 'greatly, exceedingly,' and this is precisely what is needed in place of *ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ* in Acts 2:47." We need not dwell at length on Torrey's extensive argument on this case which is to his mind "the most interesting of all" and "seems to furnish direct evidence that author and translator lived in different parts of the Aramaic world." But as far as the mistranslation's being possible only in a Judean Aramaic this much may be ventured, that if a Semitic term is sought which, though usually meaning "together" also has an intensive force, the Hebrew also has parallels to the "Judean dialects of Aramaic." Both *חדוּ* and *חדוּר* have an emphatic meaning as well as one that expresses what the lexicon calls "community in place" and some at least of the Greek translators (their usage varies, in Job the translator using *ὁμοθυμαδόν*, in Isaiah using *ἅμα* for the local sense and no Greek equivalent for the intensive sense) used *ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ* without any differentiation between the meanings. Thus in the Psalter it is used (a) of association in place and action as in 2:2: *οἱ ἄρχοντες συνήχθησαν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ* quoted in Acts 4:26 (does the *συνήχθησαν ἐπ' ἀληθείας* in the next verse show that the author of Acts understood *ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ* here as intensive?); (b) of association in time (so at least the Hebrew interpreters) in 4:8, *ἐν εἰρήνῃ ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ κοιμηθήσονται καὶ ὑπνώσω* (a verse which follows those cited in connection with Acts 14:17); (c) in various intensive senses, e.g., 19:9, *τὰ κρίματα κυρίου ἀληθινὰ, δεικνυμένα ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό*; 41:6, *ἐξεπορεύετο ἔξω καὶ ἐλάλει ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό κατ' ἐμοῦ*; 122:3, *Ἱερουσαλὴμ οἰκοδομουμένη ὡς πόλις ἧς ἡ μετοχή αὐτῆς ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό*. Without granting that in Acts 2:47 the intensive explanation is really necessary we may at least suggest that if it does seem required an original Hebrew or even an intensive use of the Greek phrase, like that familiar to Luke from its abundant use in the LXX, would cover the case fully as well. It is interesting to note that the suggestion of Hebraism here (for *חדוּר*) as for other examples of Torrey's, was current in the days of the Purist controversy and that G. D. Kypke, in his *Observationes Sacrae* (1755), illustrated from secular Greek some uses of the phrase in other meanings than that which gives offense in Acts 2:47.

prolonged collaboration of both, till a joint impression is formed which may have elements of authoritativeness."¹ Let this discussion be taken as a mild and friendly caveat against the too easy acceptance of his argument that Luke really translated written Semitic documents. No attempt has been made to meet each single example on which his cumulative argument rests, but rather to indicate some of the objections that can be offered to his assumptions and methods of argument, and to suggest a different explanation for the phenomena. The writer's whole task may be construed not as that of a mere translator with the same rigid limitations that we find in the more conservative translations in the Greek Old Testament, but as the task of a real author and editor like the Hellenistic historians. According to the alternative hypothesis here commended, Luke took over his material from sources which so far as they were written were written in Greek, he recast all his material in his own style, but varied the style to suit the situation, and in particular in the case of lyric passages, dialogue, and public addresses he put into the lips of Jews something of the Semitic idiom which was known to him from the Greek Old Testament. Even the narrative displays in different parts different degrees of Semitic coloring in a ratio quite proportionate to the amount of definite biblical quotation in those sections. Thus the Nativity stories with their distinctly biblical atmosphere and the first chapters of Acts with their abundance of Scripture quotation are rich in biblical phraseology, while the last half of Acts is much freer from both quotations and other influences of the Greek Old Testament.

¹ *Grammar of New Testament Greek*, II, 19. For the most recently published opinion of Moulton himself concerning Luke's relation to Semitic languages see in A. S. Peake's *Commentary on the Bible*, p. 592.